

Newton Stewart Flood Protection Scheme – Summary of Public Engagement 2 Feedback

<p>Total number of questionnaires completed: 64</p> <p>(124 people attended the event but some did not wish to fill in. Not all questions were completed which is why some of the response figures do not always total to 64).</p>	
<p>Have you ever been flooded in your current or previous property?</p>	<p>Yes: 19 (4 advised they had business premises, and 6 residential)</p> <p>No: 41</p>
<p>Do you want to see a Flood Protection Scheme provided in Newton Stewart?</p>	<p>Yes: 55 (100%) No: 0</p>
<p>Do you agree with the approach we are taking in developing a scheme?</p> <p>Yes: 49 (82%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As long as the wooded areas are protected for wildlife. Really like the areas for glass topped walls. Wall building needs all properties to buy into it. <p>No: 11 (12%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The timescale is shocking. There is not enough urgency. The flood devastated the town and could not cope if it happens again. The high street is quiet as it is. Put the bridge up now! I agree with most of the ideas planned for the defences however I strongly disagree with the absence of any form of clearing the river bed of debris which has built up over the past 100 years – The river MUST be dredged. New bridge is urgent and focus should be on completion of this prior to any other works. You could have provided the Sparling Bridge earlier. Telling the folk of Newton Stewart that the bridge would be opened in September 2018 and then not doing it is inexcusable. Certain issues continue to be ignored – namely attenuation in the upper catchment (ie working with the Forestry Commission) and removing restrictions in the river bed (as required in the Flood Risk Management Act). Don't want a 1.5m wall fencing in the back of our garden destroying views. No sorry, I do not want a 1.6m wall in my garden. New embankment upstream from pumping station would serve no purpose while pumping station is still blocking the flood plain. Very slow process with the bridge disappointing to say the least. Not happy with proposed glass wall – would prefer raised garden level and stone wall and access to river. Concerned about state of the island and discrepancy in water levels of Cree and Penkiln Burn and effect of this on any embankment in severe flooding. Replacing wall entirely from below the water line to new height. Soft engineering outside of town limits. Yes but very concerned about not containing water/allowing flooding upstream. 	
<p>Would you agree that all the available options to address the flooding have been included and considered?</p> <p>Yes: 27 (68%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having spoken to your representatives I think all options have been considered. Public engagement programmes are a good opportunity to ask whether or not there are things that need to be considered further. <p>No: 13 (32%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public input Still have worry regarding Sparling Bridge – 1st action to be taken is to replace it. I don't have enough information to pass proper comment on this. 	

Newton Stewart Flood Protection Scheme – Summary of Public Engagement 2 Feedback

- Consideration not given to original main bridge structure which needs to be rectified due to transport as well as pedestrian access to medical centre. At present pavement access dangerous.
- Unsure – primarily concerned (reason for coming today) re delay of new footbridge until next year. However, the reason for the delays were adequately explained to me.
- Timescale.
- Rivers need managing and this has never been done. Right after the last flood excavators should have been in the river removing rock and gravel build up. This is done throughout Europe where water from the hills flows through towns and villages.
- SEPA are responsible for blocking the dredging of the river. They need to be accountable for any future damage from floods – financially!
- Maintenance of road drainage (Millcroft Road) and residential ‘soak away’ drains?
- I would have thought dredging river bed would have helped.
- The trees and island on east side of the river and the bank of gravel on the west side below the original Cree Bridge should be removed.
- Items highlighted in the Solway Flood Management Plan have not been carried out.
- Virtually no Community involvement in the design of Sparling Bridge. Everything presented as a ‘Fait Accompli’.
- I believe maximising the flow of the river by taking away the excess stone and debris would be more effective.
- I still believe cleaning the river bank of all the debris would be effective.
- Pumping Station blockage and rubbish build up in river has not been addressed at all.
- Moving rubble out of river.
- I would still like to see a lot of the berm removed below the Cree Bridge. Lots of shrubs and trees starting to appear. Good luck with this massive challenge.
- Stones need to be removed from below the main bridge.
- Upstream storage needs to be considered.

Have you been kept up to date with the project?

Yes: **37** No: **15**

(Additional data was also gathered here about the communication methods people would like used which will assist the team in future. Email addresses were also left so we can contact people with updates direct).

Thoughts on the visit;

Venue was suitable and well located: Yes: **53 (100%)** No: **0**

Staff were helpful and available: Yes: **53 (100%)** No: **0**

Plans/boards were well presented and easy to follow: Yes: **52 (100%)** No: **0**

Visit was informative and worthwhile: Yes: **51 (98%)** No: **1 (2%)**

Process and options chosen were well explained: Yes: **47 (94%)** No: **3 (6%)**

Positive comments:

- Have learned more today.
- Staff were very helpful in explaining the process and details of the project. Thank you!

Other comments:

- Detail is important at this stage and you state design options are next – need them first.
- Reason for the delays in the promised completion date for Sparling Bridge was not explained satisfactorily in spite of questioning.
- Map of catchment area would help visualize the need.
- Sorry to give Council staff hard time!

Newton Stewart Flood Protection Scheme – Summary of Public Engagement 2 Feedback

Additional comments:

- Nothing done in 3 years.
- Property sits on the edge of river. Suggested 1.9m height wall will not be acceptable due to proximity to our house (2m ie our living room with patio doors). Height of base wall is higher than current wall and suggestion is that it may need to be thicker and encroach further onto our garden. Glass wall on top of this will be an eyesore and ruin the reason we bought the property. Feelings are you may as well brick up my windows. Glass walls are industrial looking and suitable for sides of town but not outside my window. Seepage may also affect thickness of wall. Apart from living with this eyesore you have ruled out the option of using this as a holiday let as no one would want to go outside behind a solid glass wall.
- I am not technically minded and unfortunately have not taken an interest in the development. My life experience has been that decisions are taken above my head and public consultations are publicity and placatory events.
- The matter of the replacement bridge is at the forefront of my visit. My disable mother cannot use the existing bridge safely and has basically been stuck in her house since the flood. It is only a bridge across the Cree and not the Solway Firth.
- There does seem to be an amount of uncertainty and confusion re installation of Sparling Bridge and generally a frustration of residents. D & G Council being 'highlighted' as 'dragging their feet' regarding the proposal.
- This is all a bit late.
- I sincerely hope that feedback from the public will actually be taken into consideration.
- My hope is that the work proceeds as quickly as possible.
- Do something about the buses.
- When are we getting our walking bridge back?
- I hope that the timelines for this work are adhere to and that any problems are notified to the Community Council as they arise.
- Sorry that the Sparling Bridge is taking so long to build but the team explained the reasons which are completely understandable. Thank you all.
- Sparling Bridge very sorely needed sooner rather than later due to danger on Cree Bridge.
- Get on with it A.S.A.P.
- When is the bridge being started and finished – realistic answers would be good instead of maybe's.
- Please just get Sparling Bridge build A.S.A.P.
- I hope that there does not have to be an accident on the old bridge to make you get a move on with the Sparling Bridge.
- Impressed by the commitment of the D&G staff to inform the public.
- There is no mention of flood prevention in the 10 year Forestry Commission Forest Management Plan. There must be more co-operation and input from the Scottish Govt.
- Make Forestry Commission address the land drainage problem they have created when deforested.
- Why did Planning Department approve pumping station when planning application stated area was not subject to flooding. This is not the case.
- The plans laid out in my opinion failed to address the issues residents deem to be important.
- Would like confirmation that embankment will follow line of former Meal Mill lade.
- Would have liked to have seen more engagements.
- I'm really concerned about the extensive spread of Japanese Knotweed – it is clearly visible from Mortons to Goods Land on the riverbank and spreading onto the highway. At Mortons Lane and into Sainsbury's car park.